

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 199 133

SO 013 179

AUTHOR Barzun, Jacques: Saunders, Robert J.  
TITLE Art in Basic Education. Two Papers.  
INSTITUTION Council for Basic Education, Washington, D.C.  
REPORT NO 25  
PUB DATE Mar 79  
NOTE 39p.  
AVAILABLE FROM Council for Basic Education, 725 15th Street, N.W.,  
Washington, DC (\$2.00).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Art Education; \*Basic Skills; \*Educational Needs;  
\*Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary  
Education; \*Fine Arts; \*Student Needs; Teaching  
Methods

## ABSTRACT

Two essays present a rationale for teaching and learning in the arts and consider the place of the arts in basic education. The first essay, "Art and Educational Inflation," by Jacques Barzun was the keynote address at the National Art Education Association Conference in 1978. Barzun attacks what he calls the inflationary language presently used in determining objectives in art education. He states that the goal to enable students to confront and criticize works of art is a power that few geniuses can possess. He concludes that a more realistic objective may be simply stated. It is that art is a part of our culture; it corresponds to a deep instinct in man; we therefore teach its rudiments. The second essay by Robert J. Saunders (Art Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education) argues that the arts have a valid place in basic education. Saunders describes various rationales of art educators for including the arts in basic education: the arts are basic, are important parts of basic education, and other subjects may be taught through the arts. He also discusses the variety of approaches that art teachers may use and suggests that teachers must make provisions in their lessons for students' sensitivity to problems, flexibility, originality, ability to define and rearrange, analysis, synthesis, and coherence of organization. The author stresses that, just as in any other subject, there are sequential skills to be learned in art. (Author/KC)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

ED199133

# ART IN BASIC EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

## TWO PAPERS

by

**Jacques Barzun**

The University Professor Emeritus  
Columbia University

and

**Robert J. Saunders**

Art Consultant

Connecticut State Department of Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*Mary B. Finkner*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

50 013 179

Council for Basic Education  
725 Fifteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

## WHAT THE COUNCIL IS

The Council for Basic Education is a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization whose primary purpose is the strengthening of teaching and learning in American schools. CBE believes that all students should receive instruction in the basic intellectual disciplines, especially English (including reading, writing, speech and literature), mathematics, science, history, geography, government, foreign languages, and the arts. The Council aims to unite all persons who share its conviction that there is an intimate relationship between a healthy democracy and the ideal of excellence in education.

## CBE MEMBERSHIPS AND BULLETIN SUBSCRIPTIONS

A 50 percent discount will be offered to institutional groups (five memberships or subscriptions at the same address).

Members of all classes receive the monthly CBE *Bulletin* and the occasional papers as they are issued, and they may vote at annual or special meetings. At the time of initial enrollment, *sustaining* members may choose one of CBE's books. *Associate* and *contributing* members receive all CBE publications.

CBE offers the following membership classes:

Regular membership—\$10.00

Sustaining membership—\$15.00

Associate membership—\$50.00

Contributing membership—\$100.00

Subscription to the *Bulletin* alone is available for \$8.00 a year.

## FOREWORD

Some have been surprised to learn that the Council for Basic Education includes the arts among the subjects which all students should take in school. Although art was not explicitly listed in the Council's original canon, there was for years an assumption that it belonged and should have been acknowledged. In *The Case for Basic Education* (Atlantic-Little, Brown and Company, 1959), Clifton Fadiman wrote that basic education "concerns itself with those matters, which, once learned, enable the student to learn all the other matters," and explained that "certain subjects have generative power." The Council believes that the arts, properly defined and well taught, have generative power, and in 1975 the arts were specifically included in CBE's canon of basic subjects.

Still, we were not entirely sure *how* the arts belonged in basic education. This occasional paper is an attempt to answer our own question. In the spring of 1978, Jacques Barzun, The University Professor Emeritus at Columbia University and one of the Council's directors, delivered the keynote address at the annual meeting of the National Art Education Association in Houston, Texas. His speech, "Art and Educational Inflation," presented in cogent terms a straightforward rationale for teaching and learning the arts, in contradiction to much that is offered in support of art in the schools.

The speech thus provided a point of departure for an occasional paper. But more than a rationale was needed. Robert J. Saunders agreed to carry the argument forward from Dr. Barzun's point of departure, and show how teachers in schools can make art a generative kind of learning. Dr. Saunders is Art Consultant in the Connecticut State Department of Education. A teacher himself, he has written extensively about the teaching of art. His writings include *Teaching Through Art* (American Book Company, 1972), an artprint series for the elementary grades, and *Relating Art and Humanities in the Classroom* (Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1977), a college textbook.

Readers should remember that Dr. Barzun's speech was just that: a speech, delivered to a national assembly of teachers of art, provocative in intent but constructive in purpose. Note that the speech comprehends all the arts, while Dr. Saunders's section of the paper is limited to the visual arts.

## CONTENTS

|                                                                                                            | Page |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Art and Educational Inflation<br>by Jacques Barzun .....                                                   | 1    |
| Plain Talk About Art in Basic Education<br>by Robert J. Saunders .....                                     | 15   |
| How people who agree that art is basic<br>disagree on the way art should be taught. ....                   | 15   |
| The variety of valid approaches art teachers may use—<br>and their tendency to give in to expediency. .... | 18   |
| An exemplary lesson. ....                                                                                  | 23   |
| Stages of growth in art. ....                                                                              | 24   |
| Teachers, not textbooks. ....                                                                              | 27   |
| A word about art in the secondary schools. ....                                                            | 30   |
| Suggestions for Further Reading .....                                                                      | 33   |

## ART AND EDUCATIONAL INFLATION

By Jacques Barzun

Glad as I am to be with you, and flattered by your invitation, what I feel even more keenly is the rashness of my acceptance. The cause of this feeling is the present chaotic state of opinion about art and art education in this country. Everywhere, thoughtful, earnest people concerned with the issues seem irreconcilable partisans, even though the issues are anything but clearly drawn. Like most other divisions of instruction, the teaching of art in the public schools shows nothing approaching sameness in method or substance. It varies from excellent to make-believe, from superb to absurd. The demand for it varies likewise from zero to intense. What is worse, in a time of scarce money, the arts can be readily shown as frills easy to cut off; and again, the movement called Back to Basics is seen by some as a threat to courses in the arts, while others, like the Council for Basic Education, of which I am a director, list art among the basics. Lastly, there is not—there has never been—agreement upon the reasons for giving the arts room in the curriculum. Is it for self-expression, appreciation, a future career? Or is it for the arts' intellectual contents, historical importance, or manifest role in a high civilization?

Amid this babel, I cannot hope to say anything that will please you all; I may in fact displease you all, for I am going to say more than one thing, and each remark may alienate in turn some part of this audience, until I find myself in need of a bodyguard. However it turns out, you may be sure of two facts. One is that I think the arts should be taught in the schools. The second is that my purpose is not to teach you your own business, but possibly—just possibly—lift a burden from your minds, a load of anxiety and of imaginary duties, created precisely by the causes of the present confusion.

Let us at once face the difficult position of the arts in any general school, that is, a school not exclusively devoted to one art—music school, drama school, or art school. That difficult position is inherent and due to three things—the use of time, the uneven distribution of talent, and the absence of standards other than professional. Take these together concretely: in a specialized school, most students are gifted, they are keen to

learn, want to spend long stretches of time practicing, and the teacher is free to judge progress in the light of future professional competence. In a general school, right up through college, none of these conditions survives integration with the rest of the curriculum. The gifted are held down to a few scattered hours and vague requirements, and the ungifted see no reason for the useless, highbrow stuff they are asked to study.

Why then did the arts ever come into the general schools? One reason—the best reason—is that in every generation boys and girls are born with artistic talent, and some with a drive toward developing it. Except at school—a public school—most of these children would never get a chance to discover the gift or fulfill their desire. Moreover, if gifted, they should be taught while their minds, muscles, and senses are still plastic. Nothing makes up for the lack of early training of the eye, ear, throat, and fingers.

But in recent times other reasons have been added. The belief has grown that everybody regardless of talent should become acquainted with art. With the decline of traditional religion—as I have shown elsewhere—the cult of art has taken its place in the heart and mind of western man. Art is now held to be mankind's highest form of spiritual expression. The devotees of high art say they find through it a unique harmonizing of the emotions; the devotees of popular art visibly find in it a means of social communion.

Several further arguments reinforce this unprecedented valuation of art. Some are discussed in the widely read report called *Coming to Our Senses*, which I am sure you all know. There is, first, the contention that both schooling and daily life overdo the use of words and practical knowledge, and that we should cultivate, at least as much, other modes of thought and expression. Then there is the cliché that the world has "gone visual." With television to picture things and computers to figure things out for us, words are said to have become almost unnecessary.

Yet from an opposite corner it is urged that we need art to resist the influence of just these technological wonders. As in Lewis Mumford's recantation about the machine as a model for architecture, art has come to be represented as a necessary humanizer of life, a soothing balm for our bruised spirits. Writers on education have taken up the cry for exploring a

realm where things are not measurable, literal, or useful, but purely "lyrical"—intuitive, figurative, imaginative, and hence good for our souls.

This notion of a balanced diet is very sound, but the reasoning is less so. Surely art and science, language and technology are all equally products of humanity, none "more human" than another. And when you reflect that our modern cultivation of music and painting is carried on with hi-fi and cassettes, slide projectors and color reproductions—all of them fruits of technology—you see that there is no getting away from the machine. It is only the use of it that is in our control. We are not compelled to look at television or to go visual and musical because television uses pictures and music—and both with many words, too: nobody would look at TV ten minutes if it were all in dumb show.

Besides, among those who want the arts to heal the wounds dealt by technology are some who worship science and see in the teaching of art a spur to problem-solving. They maintain that great artists and great scientists work the same way: by intuition under the control of technique, by observing things closely and making patterns among them; and so we hear rhapsodies about the beauty of mathematics and physics rivaling that of frescoes and symphonies. Finally, a few voices are heard to say that literature, which uses the now disfavored word, is also an art, where images, intuition, patterns, and other "lyrical" nonquantitative elements are to be found; and these people wonder whether literature, including poetry, is still taught as an art in the modern school.

As you can see, the chaos and confusion start in the world outside the classroom—and who should blame it? It is a permanent trait of the big world to be a smoky battleground of good and bad arguments. What is deplorable is that the school—I mean those in charge of that great institution, men and women presumably trained to work with ideas and coordinate means and ends—should be in similar or worse confusion; that they should waste their time in endless debate over the same arguments and thereby misdirect their efforts, the net result being a chorus of mutual recrimination. One says, for example, that a particular branch of art education is "worthless pap" and that he would "rather see it go out of the curriculum than continue as it is." To which another replies that "in

amount and quality that teaching is the best in the western world." And a third opines that "nobody ever likes the way anyone else teaches the subject." Worst of all, the general public utters more and more freely its discontent with all teaching, convicts it of failure, and no longer trusts those in charge, supposedly expert.

This outcome of the battle of ideas is very grave. It threatens the public school itself, the arts and the teachers of art, together with the welfare of the young entrusted to their hands.

How did the American people, the practical people who created the public school and made it work, get to such a pass? The answer is: Inflation—not monetary inflation, but intellectual, emotional, social, egotistical inflation. For the last fifty years, American education has pursued a policy of overstatement about its role and substance; it has lived by continual exaggeration of what it is for and what it can do. The medium naturally is words, words misunderstood and misapplied—it is verbal inflation.

As in the worst sort of advertising, whatever education offers is said, ahead of time, to be the latest and best, perfect, supreme; the results of its use are glorious, incomparable, magnificent. In the literature of education, what we teach and the benefits that follow are always universal in scope; we acknowledge no limits; we will not tell the truth nor face the simple facts. We suspend common sense and fly to metaphors and abstractions to cover the genuine things that we can do, that we could do, if we were not addicted to educational guff. If you doubt my word, read your top-heavy curriculum plans, your twelve objectives and your twenty-three guidelines, and bring to mind the dozens and scores of highfalutin' slogans with which our profession has gargled during the last two generations, swinging this way and that between equally unreal panaceas, now all gone with the wind of which they were made.

The error began with the replacement of the word *pedagogy* with the word *education*. Pedagogy is not a beautiful word, but it sticks to the point of teaching. It denotes the art of leading a child to knowledge, whereas education properly refers to a completed development, or the whole tendency of the mind toward it. A person is taught by a teacher but

educates himself or herself, partly by will, partly by assimilating experience. The educator's egotistical urge to blur this distinction is at the root of our present predicament. Thinking that we can "give an education," we make wild claims and promises and forget to teach what is teachable. Babbling incessantly, we grope toward the remote, ill-defined, unattainable goals that fill our blatant advertising.

On the particular subject of our concern, look critically at what is said in current discussions of art for the schools. Here is a short list of the aims: to develop an aesthetic potential—what is that but vague and pretentious talk? to transmit the cultural heritage—how can this possibly be done in one course? to supply an outlet for self-expression—this is impossible before technique is mastered; to give a chance of success to non-verbal minds—good, but success in which art and to what degree? to enlarge the understanding of Man—does this really come out of modeling clay or playing in the band? to master a system of symbols—this may do for reading music but not for painting or any form of design; to fill out the outline of history, which is incomplete without art—that implies art history, not art in practice; to acquaint the child with foreign cultures—that would mean comparing styles after much familiarity with one's own; to show that not everything is quantifiable—this can be done while teaching English composition, American history, or any foreign language; to enhance achievement in other subjects—why use art for this purpose instead of pep pills or free hamburgers? to counter-balance utilitarian subjects—who says that playing drums or drawing cans of tomato soup can't be utilitarian?

These stated goals are bad enough, but trailing after them is a batch of slogans supposed to organize the lust for art: teach a sensory language; communicate creatively; visual (musical) literacy; social studies enrichment; engender general creativeness; build ethnic identity; enhance problem-solving; humanize schooling; give creative vision; achieve affective education. This last, according to one enthusiast, is interpreted as meaning that "it is more important to feel rightly than to think rightly." What a false dilemma! Must one be either a fool or a knave? And if one feels rightly, does it not imply some thought which is also right? Why so many irresponsible words?

It is all inflation. It inflates the plausible or possible into the miraculous. And remember that this collection of vague, vacuous, lofty, unexamined phrases is not taken from as many plans expressing different hopes. One document contains eighteen such purposes, all to be gone after and realized by any one school program. Several other programs list six or eight of these wonder cures. None connects any slogan or objective with any particular activity recognizable as teaching art. What this fatal gap means is that art—the most concrete, tangible, sensuous business in the world—art becomes an abstraction, a great white cloud showering on us by magic 6 or 10 or 18 golden benefits.

Now compare with the hazy vistas of the inflationists something known to have happened. Under one art program sponsored from outside, a master dancer and drummer from Ghana came to a sixth-grade class "to focus on the arts of Africa for two weeks" (decide for yourselves what "focus" means). During that time the class "created African art of their own." Thanks to another scheme, the federal program called Artists in Schools, a professional weaver was sent to a school where six students were excused from music class for eight weeks to study her craft. According to one report, the course "concentrated on technique rather than creativity, appreciation, or the history of the art."

Here at last we have two bits of reality, in contrast with all the inflated descriptions. But don't mistake the point of the contrast. I am not saying the weaver and the drummer did the right thing—or the wrong thing, either. I am saying that these are the modest little events blanketed under the usual verbiage of "catalyst for general creativity" and "exciting introduction of a new dimension in the school."

Is it not now clear that even when something actual, positive is done about art in the class, the inflationary temper immediately works distortion and confusion upon the facts? Take first the prostituted word, "creative." Think of the creation, by God or Chance—making something where nothing was before; something new, unexampled, fresh and fit to arouse wonder. To me, the wonder of artistic creation is so great that creative is a sacred word, forbidden except to describe extraordinary achievements. I find it offensive to African art that in two weeks a sixth-grade class *created* "African art of their own."

Similarly, in the judgment passed on the weaver, one can see how completely school people have lost the sense of reality. How could that craftswoman teach in eight weeks the history of the art? How can any such course do anything but show some small part of one kind of weaving? And until various kinds are shown and compared, how can "appreciation" occur? The disappointed tone of the comment is a measure of educational illusionism—those eight weeks did not transmit the cultural heritage, enrich the social studies, fill out the picture of history, teach a new sensory language, humanize schooling, or acquaint the students with other cultures. All it did was excite them like an unexpected party—and keep them away from the art of music.

In truth, the language of all these proposals, discussions, and reports verges on the insane. What is *general* creativity? Do we say "general championship"? Or is the champion the one who has in fact won the title, once or more than once? Again, if art is to "humanize schooling" are we admitting that the rest of the curriculum is inhuman? Art as an antidote to schooling means we first poison the young and then make them cough up the dose with an elective.

Do not comfort yourselves with the thought that nothing more is involved here than professional jargon which a purist is taking exception to. I am dealing not with detachable words but with the substance of attitudes and actions. Through the ideas that I bring to your consciousness and try to make you see as deplorable you cripple your teaching, for the ideas misdirect it. And you deceive your students by false promises raising false hopes. You pretend to be in a state of uninterrupted orgasmic euphoria while actually in a condition of perpetual impotence.

Look at some of those unthinking words again: the verbal is said to be overstressed, but we are asked to teach visual *literacy* and a sensory *language*. Language and literacy refer to words and nothing else. The metaphor that applies them to artistic matters is false and misleading; it destroys the case for art, whose rightful claim to special merit is that it is a mode of thought without words, *in-articulate*, *sui generis*. This mania for misnaming, this love of fog is infectious and I regret to add that one of the best writers on our subject was led by it to suggest that the goal of a good education in art should be: "How to

create, confront and criticize works of art"; that is to say, give evidence of a triple power that only a few geniuses in each generation can be said to possess.

These fantasies and the meager facts behind them drive one to an obvious conclusion. If we cannot organize in our heads a few solid ideas about art in the world and art in the classroom, then the sooner we give up planning and theorizing the better. No use palavering about "affective education" when we are so far from any sort of effective education—and not only in art: 23 million functional illiterates are among us mutely reproaching us for our sins of inflation.

Such is also the view of sensible citizens, of parents on the schoolboards and the tax rolls. I quote one of them who a few months ago wrote to the Council for Basic Education, precisely about teaching art. He said: "I don't believe any thoughtful person is 'out to get art' because it is art. The thing that bothers most of us lay people is that we do not share the confidence of educators that, on the one hand, the three R's seem so difficult to teach, so subtle to introduce, so impossible to measure true progress in; and yet on the other hand the teaching of such subjective disciplines as art, current events, and movie-making is so straightforward and easy. . . . If the core curriculum were demonstrably well taught, the lay public would trust educators to attempt teaching art as well."

That is clear and candid speech—no ulterior motive, no partisanship for one or another doctrine. The man tells us who believe in teaching art what we are up against. And he confirms the connection I have made between our special subject and the general corruption of pedagogy by the abstract, the grandiose, and the impossible. Through the inflation of terms and of our own egos we ourselves have raised up the obstacles we perpetually groan about. We have forgotten that like governing, teaching is the art of the possible.

What then is the remedy? It is obvious, in plain sight, staring us in the face. We must sober up; give up getting drunk on hope and verbiage; stop writing committee reports, guidelines, objectives. Mimeographed paper is the hard drug of the educational world. All those words ending in *-tion* and *-ive* are narcotics that break down the mind permanently. There do not have to be 18 reasons to justify art in the school. One is enough. Let it be put this way: "Art is an important part of

our culture. It corresponds to a deep instinct in man; hence it is enjoyable. We therefore teach its rudiments."

Do a good job of teaching them and what happens after that is none of your business. No teacher, no "educator" has a right to expect—much less to demand—those miraculous results, those improvements and transformations of the human soul. We are not gods, or even demigods, that we should dare push and pull, manipulate and mold others into the ideal image we have formed of the artist, or the connoisseur, or the cultivated man, whose senses are polished like a keyboard for art to play a tune on. To be or not to be such a person is each living being's private concern.

Give up utopianism, get sober and stay sober, and think of all the released time at your disposal, clear of committee meetings and the reading of reports. Think of all the restored energy, free from wild or platitudinous guidelines. The serious energy crisis of our day is that with so much human effort expended, the nation gets so little real work done—in business, in government, in the schools. We are busy bodies and low achievers.

This earnest suggestion of mine—to cut down by an act of will the verbal and mental inflation that denatures every purpose in education—that suggestion is what I hoped might lift a burden from you; might relieve anxiety and lessen toil by removing a dead load of pseudo-thought and pseudo-work. You need not fear that if you act on it you will cause unemployment—except perhaps among the pure verbalizers, who by dint of believing their own advertisements have become incapable of the real work—teaching and supervising.

But good or bad, my suggestion does not tell you what to do, and without some indicated path you can hardly muster new courage and energy for the real work I keep referring to. True—yet I am confident that many of you already have implicit answers to the question, What to do; and I am sure that when you are liberated from present theoretical shackles, the results will be better than what has been. Even so, I should like to recommend to both the self-assured and the hesitant that they start with an act which our crowded lives rarely permit—to think. To think, not with the aid of books or articles or studies, but nakedly, with the bare mind; and again, to think not lofty thoughts in big words, as if for publication, but think

plainly and privately; don't get up on a ladder, but think like Richard II when he said: "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings." Sit on the ground and tell yourself what you know—what you know about art, about teaching, about people young and old.

Trust your common sense, keeping away from the old grooves of educational piety, and you will make some interesting discoveries, reach conclusions you can rely on, because they come out of your whole experience and not your make-believe slogans and shop-talk. Consider, for example, the idea of Art. What do *you* think it covers? Well, music and painting and sculpture, of course, and the dance and—oh, literature, also. (So easy to forget literature when it's called English or composition or even language arts.) But does Art include acting, scene-painting, directing, film-making, journalism, broadcasting, photography, weaving, pottery, jewelry-making, batik, macrame—the list can be long if Art includes all the crafts.

While pondering the list, you can amuse yourself by matching any item—say photography—against the current "objectives" of humanizing technology, building up a sensory language, or extending the taste for lyrical emotion. But the serious question to ask yourself is, Which of all the namable arts and crafts are in fact teachable in school? None completely, that is sure. The school cannot turn out a painter, a weaver, or a film-maker, no matter how much talent and drive is present at the start. It is sure also that in the greater number there will be little or no such talent. These two facts lead one to wonder whether any fundamentals can be found that underlie several forms of art. *Is* there something which is to the arts what arithmetic is to the higher mathematics, what reading and writing are to literature and all other written discourse? Clearly, the rudiments of music serve in just that way the dancer, singer, and instrumentalist, as well as the composer, critic, and amateur of music. Likewise drawing serves all the arts and crafts that consist of making visual patterns. The photographer and film-maker work with design as much as the sculptor, scene-painter, weaver, jeweler, or dress-maker. What is more, the rudiments are equally useful in the sophisticated and in the popular form of every art.

In these two sets of rudiments, then, we seem to have got

hold of the practical roots of all the arts except literature. The special use that each art makes of the fundamentals varies indefinitely and the school could not begin to teach all the applications. To teach some and not others would mean an arbitrary choice, needlessly enforced on students who might prefer some other arts or crafts. Why not open the way to the full range of later individual interest by concentrating on the root disciplines? In other words, why not the basics in art too? If you think a moment about that ugly word, you will see that what it means in effect is: The teachables—what can actually be taught in a general school, the common ground of mental and physical activity that is the foundation of all self-development, self-expression, and self-satisfaction.

It is not my place to tell you in detail what the rudiments of music and design are, much less how to go about teaching them at the several stages of human growth. All I permit myself to say is that if one begins the right teaching early enough, all normal children can acquire the habits on which these two of the three great divisions of art build their structures. For habits is all that the basic powers consist of: bodily habits—of the eye, the ear, and the hand. I do not believe that any ear, caught young, is incurably tone-deaf, and I do believe that anyone who can learn to write can learn to draw—and might write a better-looking hand in consequence.

All this, you may say, is academic stuff. How do we teach the children to be original, innovative? You don't; you can't. Originality is not teachable. Academic is what teaching ought to be in an academy. The great innovators start from there, and they innovate to good purpose when they have reached the limits of academic skill or when, through a special gift, they modify unconsciously in themselves the physical habits that are basic to design or to the art of sounds. In either case, the results embody an acquired skill and not simply the first vagaries of the dabbler.

You may ask, But where in all this is the fun? Sight-reading, taking dictation of intervals and rhythms, learning to sing or play in tune; and again, learning to draw in perspective, to copy in various media, and use colors in the light of theory is nothing but hard work, much of it drill, and some of it learning by rote. So it is; so it should be. Only by demanding hard work will the arts escape the charge of being an expensive and

expendable frill. Only so will they achieve tangible results. Nor does this principle apply only to art. The sole justification of teaching, of the school itself, is that the student comes out of it able to do something he could not do before. I say *do* and not *know*, because knowledge that doesn't lead to doing something new or doing something better is not knowledge at all.

But before you give me up as a slave-driver, think once more. The two sets of rudiments I have defined do not exist as bare bones, except temporarily for pedagogy. In reality, they are embedded in pieces of genuine art, even when the pieces are simple and easy to grasp. Children will respond to singing them, copying them, coloring them, analyzing them, once the means have been put into their hands and their heads. All new powers bring enjoyment to the possessor, and the extracurricular uses of power over sound and rhythm, over color and line are so many and so obvious that nobody need worry that this mode of art teaching will fail to bring pleasure. What should be worried about is the course that leads nowhere because it aims only to please, by fooling around with art, by make-believe about self-expression and creativity, by improvising African art in two weeks. Such schemes of shreds and patches and playing at serious subjects is what has brought down the high repute of the American public school. The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare has stated that in our *best* schools, only 18 percent of the time is devoted to scholastic work. He naturally concludes that we are in a bad way; and he is of course unable to tell us how workmanlike that 18 percent of work is.

In these conditions our only hope is to fight our way back, win back our good name, by thinking straight and working hard and never forgetting that all the school subjects are members one of another, born and created equal within the single mind of man. There is good reason for music and the graphic arts to expect from their students competent arithmetic and some knowledge of other peoples, times, and places. And both these branches of art must also make demands on their third sister, literature, the English language now in dire straits from abuse and neglect. Sensitivity to words is part of pedagogy at large, as it has been my ungrateful task to demonstrate today by contrasting slogans with sober facts. But words—correct words—are also indispen-

sable to the teaching of art. Critical judgment, appreciation, stylistic analysis, disputation about tastes, historical comparisons, and efficient instruction itself depend on the appropriate use of words. Indeed, except for the handful of students who become professional artists after a grounding in the public school, the benefits of teaching art to the young will consist mainly in the pleasure that comes of being able to see and hear works of art more sharply and subtly, more consciously, to register that pleasure in words, and compare notes with other people similarly inclined. The cultivation of the arts is a social as well as an individual enterprise, which is a second reason why its beginnings, however difficult to teach, properly belong among the teaching duties of the school.

## PLAIN TALK ABOUT ART IN BASIC EDUCATION

By Robert J. Saunders

The question "What is art and what is not?" is one that aestheticians and philosophers have debated for more than 2,000 years. Plato and Aristotle ascribed art to the imitation of nature in its ideal form. In the nineteenth century, moral and spiritual attributes were thought to separate the high or fine arts from the applied, practical, and decorative arts. In our day, both the effect of modern technology and theories on the disintegration of form have reignited smoldering arguments of years past. In my view, all the arts—in one form or another—have a valid place in basic education.

### **How people who agree that art is basic disagree on the way art should be taught.**

Art educators have reacted in a variety of ways to the call for a return to the basics. They dismiss the art-is-a-frill argument in different ways, each of which says something about the relation of the arts to basic education. There is lack of agreement about the validity of each of these philosophies, and the disagreement allows for diverse and continuous discourse.

*The arts are basic.* There is an implication here that the arts are the center of education, and should be the means of teaching other academic subjects. This approach, advocated by the Arts, Education, and Americans panel<sup>1</sup>, promotes the theory that learning through the senses should replace or at least be placed on a par with cognitive learning—that the child's entire body, not just the head, should be used in learning.

*The arts are important parts of basic education.* This point of view suggests that some art courses and skills are basic, others are not; drawing, painting, and sculpting are, but weaving and making pots, jewelry, and film-making are not. Basic courses in art, music, dance, and literature are all right, but acting out and performing drama is not as basic as reading plays as literature. Yet plays were written to be acted and watched. Acting is certainly basic to drama; and drama, basic

to understanding dramatic literature. As I have already stated, I believe that all aspects of the arts are essential to basic education, but they must be used proportionately as they are needed to fulfill their basic functions.

*Reading (or other subjects) can be taught through the arts.* This extension of the arts-are-basic approach is used to teach academic subjects, notably reading. Programs that have received special attention and funding (from Title I, Elementary & Secondary Education Act) include Learning to Read Through the Arts at the Guggenheim Museum and The Cloisters in New York City, and Reading Improvement Through Art (RITA) in nine New York City high schools. Reading instruction is combined with art activities by the use of charts, and by acting out words, forming letters and numbers with the body, or playing charades and other games. A major problem in such programs is maintaining the balance between good learning in art and good learning in reading, math, or whatever subject is being taught.

*The basic arts should precede specialized courses at the secondary or college level.* This avenue also suggests that some arts are more basic than others. Introductory courses present basic skills, concepts, and terminology related to making and looking at art objects: drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, art history, art appreciation, pottery, crafts, and sometimes lettering. Art history is usually taught along with studio techniques by familiarizing students with artists' works that use the same techniques or subject matter they are studying. Because examples of works of art help students learn techniques, art appreciation is most frequently taught in conjunction with studio work. (In an art class that stresses appreciation, students learn techniques in order to recognize the particular style of the artist.)

It is not always a theory that governs the teaching of art: sometimes budget and materials determine what is basic. It was not until after the Civil War that water colors in the pan were introduced in this country. At first they were expensive and recommended only for advanced students, while others used pencils or pen and ink learning to draw geometrical shapes, architectural subjects, and linear perspectives. Manual drawing was basic; "picture-making" or drawing from one's imagination was discouraged because it represented the will

of the Devil. When Horace Mann was a young boy, his knuckles were hit with a stick for the "crime" of drawing a sunset.

The inventions of colored chalk during the Civil War, wax crayons in the late 1880's, and the improvement of watercolors at the end of the century by such manufacturers such as Louis Prang, Milton Bradley, Binney and Smith, and the American Crayon Company, changed the concept of basic art materials. Today, although oil paints and watercolors in tubes are often reserved for the use of advanced art students, children are encouraged to paint from their imaginations without the threat of hellfire. In the same way that art-material manufacturers revolutionized nineteenth-century concepts of basic art to meet the needs of twentieth-century children, American technology today is revolutionizing our concepts of art and preparing us to meet the needs of the children of the twenty-first century.

Such a variety of approaches to making art basic in education and the revolutionary impact of technology on art make it virtually impossible to have an official or authorized definition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to be basically educated when it comes to art. The closest thing we have to official definition are the objectives developed in 1969 for the National Assessment of Educational Progress by a committee of art educators. Surely any student who meets them all will have gone far beyond what might be called the functional literacy level in art, but the NAEP objectives serve to suggest what art educators consider basic.

Students who meet the NAEP objectives can recognize and describe such aspects of art as the subject, the "expressive content" (the subject combined with the characteristic visual form), and the formal qualities (principles of design: repetition, contrast, dominance, movement, balance, and so forth). They know how to value art as a part of human experience and they are open-minded about different forms and styles of art. They can produce original and imaginative works of art that have particular subjects or composition; they know about and are able to use various media, tools, and techniques. They have learned how to make and justify aesthetic judgments, using specific criteria. They recognize major figures and works in the history of art and understand their significance—that is,

they know works of art that began new styles, markedly influenced subsequent works, changed the directions of art, contained visual and technical discoveries, or expressed the spirit of the age. Such students have an understanding of the concept of style and the relation of one style or period to others. Finally, they can appreciate the relationships between art and other disciplines (literature, music, philosophy, political science) of a given period.

The results of the first National Assessment of Design and Drawing Skills were published in June 1977. Although the assessment was limited to four drawings, Sarah Knight, NAEP analyst, says the results suggest that achievement in art follows a pattern like that of other subjects, and that skills necessary for successful artistic achievement (like other academic skills) can be learned.

**The variety of valid approaches art teachers  
may use—and their tendency to give in to expediency.**

Assessments of drawings evaluate what children and young people can do. Art exhibits, hallway displays, bulletin boards, and the work that children bring home to hang on the refrigerator, show what they make in art class. However, what goes on in the head of the individual child painting a picture is not always revealed either to the trained eye of the art educator or to the untrained eyes of parents. The child's work of art is a silent-visual testimony to an art lesson, but which one and what kind? A poster tempera painting of a bowl of apples can result from a lesson in seeing, in painting representationally, or a lesson in color mixing, composition, or abstraction. It can be painted from an actual still life of real or wax apples, copied from another picture, or painted from the imagination. All that we know for sure, by just looking at the picture, is that it is a painting in poster tempera of a bowl of apples. What the student is supposed to have learned and what went on in his head cannot always be discovered from the painting itself. That hidden process is the curriculum. That process is why girls and boys are given art classes.

When deciding what to do for an art lesson, art teachers may consult a number of sources—art curriculum guides, professional journals, their own notes. The teacher's orientation

and that of the art curriculum may be built around one of a number of basic approaches to art instruction.<sup>2</sup>

The *art concepts* plan studies principles and elements of design (line, color, texture, shape, and form), art history, color theory, rules of linear perspective, art criticism, aesthetic analysis, or humanistic themes (art for propaganda, art as visual symbols, war and peace in art, art and the love image, and so forth). This approach does not necessarily include making an art product. Teaching is sometimes based on *art media*: crayons, ink, watercolors, oils, acrylics, clay, glazes, fabrics, film. Information about the conventions and properties of the media are learned as the student uses the particular medium. The *art techniques* procedure emphasizes drawing, painting, printmaking, carving, modeling, film-making, weaving, or throwing or wedging clay. The teacher may decide to teach drawing, and then determine which of the appropriate materials—crayons, pen and ink, pencils—will be used. Knowledge about techniques can be tested orally or in writing, but the best test of a student's knowledge of art techniques is by application. The *art projects* method is directed towards a product—greeting cards, piggy banks from Clorox bottles, murals, masks, ash trays—to be used in an exhibit or to take home.

During the course of a school year, most teachers use every approach to some extent, depending on their orientation and on the circumstances. Each method has its place in a well-balanced curriculum; instruction features whatever approach the teacher takes, although the art product may be the same for any one of several approaches.

In selecting the approach for an art lesson, a teacher might consider: "What is the information my students need to know about art before leaving my class (*art concepts*)? What kinds of paintings or sculpture have they not yet done? It is spring; we'll go outdoors and do a landscape (*art subject matter*). Let's see now, we used crayon last week, what shall we use this week (*art media*)? We haven't taught printmaking yet. But what materials shall we use—ink, paint, found objects (*art techniques*)?" And, "What can we do for an art lesson? A week from Sunday is Mother's Day. I'll have them make a card with a crepe paper flower (*art project*)."

Unfortunately, all too often the rationale for using a par-

ticular method is based on expediency rather than on what the teacher feels children should know or learn about art. Art from scrap, found art, crayons, or other available materials may determine the art curriculum from the opening of school until the art supplies arrive. Art budgets may exert more control over what the children actually learn than a curriculum which describes what they should learn. A holiday becomes a motivation for a product; techniques become secondary. Sometimes, to enable children to complete their projects in time for the holiday, teachers sacrifice instruction in skills—or, to make sure that children are successful, they rely on old skills when they ought to teach new ones.

Because art teachers—however unwittingly—often do ignore the intellectual activity of children, it is important that they do more than choose among the approaches to art lessons (*concepts, media, techniques, projects*). They must make provision in their lessons for what art-educator Viktor Lowenfeld and psychologist J. P. Guilford call criteria for creativity.<sup>3</sup> These comprehend *sensitivity to problems, fluency, flexibility, originality, ability to redefine and rearrange, analysis, synthesis, and coherence of organization*. These talents or qualities have application to virtually all learning, of course, and call for explanation here.

*Sensitivity to problems* is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes obvious or something dangerous happens, to forecast or prophesy, to empathize with feelings outside oneself. Doctors and medical laboratory technicians, architects and building contractors, highway engineers and teachers need such sensitivity. In art, a student exercises it when he detects tiny cracking in drying clay as he works it, for example, or as he adjusts the subtle balance of parts in a mobile; as he controls the drop-by-drop change of color when he mixes paint, or thins paint so that it will not glob but still retain its hue; or as he constructs a paper or toothpick sculpture to stand by itself. When Johnny paints a starving child in a mural on world hunger, and Janie paints slaves working, they may begin to have empathy with starving and oppressed people.

*Fluency* is the ability to think of many solutions to a problem, many uses for a particular material or thing, and to provide alternative solutions in a short period of time. A teacher

who asks students to make ten thumb-nail sketches for a design is saying "Solve this problem ten ways." And when a student makes cut-paper designs and moves shapes around for different arrangements before choosing the best one, he is using the ability to try different ideas and delay decision. To be able to change directions in midstream is to be *flexible*—to use a mistake as the basis of a new idea, for example, or to change a plan that clearly is leading nowhere. Janie learns to be flexible when paint drops from her brush on a landscape painting and she turns the drops into flowers rather than destroy the picture. Johnny learns to be flexible when he works in modeling clay that can be bent, changed, and adjusted. To learn how to use the best part of an artwork and change the rest to improve the whole is to learn flexibility.

A student who can think of solutions and ideas not suggested by the teacher or copied from others has the talent called *originality*. Originality is often difficult to recognize because we never really know what students see or experience outside the classroom. The last idea of ten may be a student's most original simply because he had to think hardest to come up with the tenth. Like imagination, originality cannot come from nothing, but grows from many experiences. A teacher can encourage originality by not letting children copy the pictures of others, but by expecting them to draw on resources within themselves. To *redefine and rearrange* is to find other meanings or solutions by rearranging various parts of a whole, or various factors and elements. When boys and girls rearrange wire or clay to change an elephant into a giraffe, or cut pictures from magazines to create a face montage, they are redefining those objects. In surrealistic art, where objects take on symbolic meanings, or when a student makes a sculpture or a print from found objects, he is learning to redefine and rearrange.

*Analysis* is a matter of noticing details, separating parts from the whole, identifying evidence inside contour outlines, extracting meaning from symbols in contrast to merely identifying objects and details. Johnny is analyzing a work of art when he looks for examples of the principles and elements of design. When tracing movement, finding repetitions and contrast of colors, textures, or shapes in a painting, he separates abstract concepts from the subject matter. Following a line of

complex movement in a painting is not unlike following the route of a highway on a road map. Johnny uses analysis when he carves away in sculpting, or models in clay by forming the arms and legs from the whole. If the teacher asks him to draw something from memory, he activates his visual memory, an analytical process. On the other hand to put divergent parts together again, often with a new meaning, is to make a *synthesis*. Janie synthesizes when she works jig-saw puzzles (which also require visual analysis), makes a collage, mosaic, or montage. Assemblage and sculpture by addition are synthesizing processes. The sequencing used in film-making and animation is one of the most complex synthesizing processes Janie can do in school. When she makes a wood block or linoleum print by cutting away, she is analyzing, but when she makes a print with found objects or when she assembles shapes, she is synthesizing. Weaving is both an analyzing and a synthesizing process.

*Coherence of organization* has to do with giving order, unity, design and overall meaning to a statement, product or concept. The principles of design such as balance, movement, emphasis, subordination, contrast, and repetition, are parts of coherence in a visual work of art. When students make designs using such factors, or analyze paintings according to such principles to determine its quality, they are finding a new sense of order.

In whatever art activity Johnny and Janie take part, they use one or more of these creative mental processes. Their teacher may be teaching a concept or a technique, or demonstrating a new medium, but they use these mental processes to complete the task even though the lesson may not emphasize them. Sometimes, however, the teacher may select an activity for the sake of the creative mental process it uses rather than the technique required or the subject matter. The teacher may say, "Let's see. Last week we made a collage, and the week before we made a mosaic. Both of those were synthesizing processes (putting together). Maybe it's time for a more analytical process. The weather's too cold for landscapes, so we'll stay indoors and do a still life. Now what kind of materials do my students need more experience with?" Using this rationale, the teacher's primary objective is to give students more experience in visual analysis (looking at the

still life). The secondary objective is to give them more experience with a particular medium (oil paints, acrylic, crayons, or poster tempera). Poster tempera may be appropriate if it is a medium they can already control to produce successful colors, rather than a new or difficult medium which may give them problems not related to the objective. They are to analyze what they see, and demonstrate it in their visual statement.

### **An exemplary lesson.**

A white bowl of red apples is set on a green cloth. Large and small apples have been chosen. Some of the apples have yellow and green areas for color contrast. For the younger students the contrast are obvious, but for more advanced students the contrasts are more subtle. Rather than tell the students what they *should* see, the teacher asks them to describe what they *do* see. Their answers are accepted, but sometimes followed with questions to help them clarify their verbal statements before they make visual statements in paintings. Reproductions of apple paintings by Cézanne or other artists may be shown to older children to help them recognize differences in style, technique, or treatment of color pertaining to apples. At the secondary level these may be related to periods in art history.

The class gathers around the bowl of apples. At their tables their paints and paper are ready. The class is told, "Today we're going to paint apples, but first I want you to look at them closely, so gather around the bowl. What do you notice about the apples?" (They're red.) "Yes, are they all red?" (No.) "What other colors do you see?" (Yellow, green.) "Can you describe the green?" (It's light green, a small spot; it's on the bottom.) "How many apples are there in the bowl?" (They count. Ten.) "How are they arranged?" (Stacked, one on top of the other.) "Which apples are on the bottom and which on top?" (Big ones on the bottom, small on top.) "Very good. Now what color is the bowl?" (White.) "Do you notice other colors in the white bowl?" (Red, pink, yellow—and, oh yes, light green.) "Why?" (They are the reflection of the apples and the cloth.) "Everyone take an apple and feel it, smell it. Don't eat it; lift

it. What do you notice about it? Notice how your fingers wrap around it. Look at it closely. Pass it on to someone else." After they have inspected the apples, they talk about them, then put them back in the bowl, large ones on the bottom. They talk about the bowl and the green cloth.

"All right," says the teacher, "Go back to your seats and paint a picture of the apples in the bowl. If you want to look at the apples later to solve a problem, do so, but don't disturb the apples because they should stay in the same place. Does anyone have questions?" With their materials ready, children can begin work while their ideas are fresh, without losing their motivation and enthusiasm. The teacher has been wise to separate them from their materials by having them look closely at the apples. This way, they are not likely to play with the materials during the instruction and motivation.

Our Johnny and Janie were in that group. Because they smelled, gripped, felt, and lifted the apples, their sensory memory was richer than if they had only looked at the apples from their seats. Each was reminded of what he already knew about apples—how apples are different yet alike—and their recollection will help them draw and paint. When they finish painting, they will not only know more about apples, but know better how to study things. Because they have already had experience mixing colors and using the poster tempera, they are more assured of successful paintings than if they had to work with paints they were unsure of. When the time comes for them to use different types of paints (oils or acrylics, for example), their teacher will give them introductory lessons and experiments before they are expected to apply them to a particular project.

### **Stages of growth in art.**

Knowing what one can reasonably expect of children as they develop and go through school is helpful in guiding them along their way. It is impossible, of course, to be definitive about the stages of growth through which children go in art, but the stages described in 1947 by Viktor Lowenfeld have proved to be durable norms.<sup>4</sup> Few parents would question Lowenfeld's notion that two-, three-, and four-year-olds are in the "scrib-

bling stage." Young children enjoy the movement of hands and arms, and like to see the lines appear when they make uncontrolled scribbles and markings. As their scribbling assumes longitudinal and circular characteristics, they begin to gain control. Next, they make simple, individual shapes and configurations (circles, crosses, squares, lines that cross and parallel); and at last, using imagination to give meaning to abstract shapes and lines, they name their scribbles.

Lowenfeld puts children in the four- to seven-year age group in the "pre-schematic stage." Now they explore ways to draw people, houses, flowers, clouds, and things of their world. Drawing a line at the bottom of his picture, a child now draws people, houses, flowers, trees on the line, showing awareness of the world around him. Logically enough, a "schematic stage" comes next. Having found satisfaction in symbols of his own making, a child may seek security now and turn his symbols into stereotypes by drawing each house, tree, flower, and person alike. These become his "visual vocabulary"; and with opportunities to draw many types of people, flowers, houses, and whatever, he expands this visual vocabulary and finds other ways than a base line to show space and distance.

After the schematic stage comes the "gang stage" (nine to eleven years), when drawings begin to show such details as sex differentiation by clothes and hair, more relationships between human figures and the environment, more action, and conscious design elements. At this stage children begin to question their own visual symbols with their perceptions of reality. When they are twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, children are said to be in the "pseudo-naturalistic stage" of development of art knowledge and skill. Their drawings tend to be tight and still, small, with more space. Or they may even abandon drawing. Between fourteen and seventeen they come to a "period of decision," when they are likely to experience increasing need to make a conscious effort in drawing and painting, and want to measure their skills against adult standards.

Even when Johnny and Janie become adults, they may draw as if they were still eight-year-olds. For several years I have been conducting art workshops for elementary classroom teachers and college students. I have collected close to 300 adults' crayon drawings of "I am brushing my teeth in the bathroom." On the backs of their drawings they tell me how

much art they had in school. Those who feel most insecure, resistant, or hesitant to draw, indicate that they had little or no art in elementary school and little since. Their solutions to drawing the figure and space concepts are very much at the schematic stage or gang stage. Rather than say they can't draw, I prefer to think they are retarded in art because they were never given the opportunity to move beyond their elementary-school stereotypes.

Coloring stencils and coloring books are common and serious deterrents to a child's development in art. When Janie colors in the shapes and stays within the lines, she reverts back to her three-year-old controlled scribble ability. And when she sees adult outline drawings of persons, houses, flowers and things, Janie may decide she can't draw, because her seven-year-old drawing does not compare with the adult concept. In trying to copy the adult drawing, she will distort, and often lose, the richness of detail in her own drawing.

Even before the first grade, when children are given coloring books at home and color-in worksheets in day nursery, they may revert to earlier levels or become frustrated and unimaginative. When they begin to say "I can't draw," at an early age, there is likely to be evidence of improper adult intervention. For example, drawings of children who have depended heavily on coloring-in devices tend to be small, tight, and close to the bottom of the page.

The first-grade-teacher who gives Johnny color-in worksheets to develop his fine motor skills is actually working against such development. The hand motion for coloring-in a small area is the same one he developed by himself at the controlled (longitudinal) scribble stage. On the other hand, when drawing, his fine motor controls make lines that are long, short, straight, curved, loopy, zigzaggy, repetitious—a greater variety than just filling in space. These are the same skills needed for manuscript lettering and cursive writing. Drawing leads to good penmanship; the coloring-in of pre-drawn shapes and outlines does not.

In the first grade, drawing and writing—which are the same basic skill—are put in conflict with each other. When I taught art in the elementary schools, first grade teachers would ask me what to do for this boy or that girl who was not doing well in writing. The first time this happened, the teacher asked,

"Shall I give him extra writing drill?" "No," I said. "Give him more plasticine (modeling clay): Have him model with it every day. You want him to develop his fine muscle controls. If you give him more writing drills he will learn to hate writing. Let him develop them in modeling and art and it will show up in his writing." The teacher did so, and later told me of his improvement. In my art classes children from kindergarten through second grade had a ball of modeling clay (kept in a half-pint milk carton) to use during their free time.

### **Teachers, not textbooks.**

In the primary grades, artistic growth depends not on students' initiative in drawing spontaneously, but on the quality of their instruction. As there are in other subjects, there are sequential skills to be learned in art. If they are not taught new ways of drawing, Johnny and Janie will draw stereotypes most of their lives.

Except for those by Guy Hubbard and Mary Rouse (*Meaning, Method, and Media*, Benefic Press, n.d.) there are no sequential textbook series in art to the extent that there are for reading and mathematics instruction. Therefore it is the teacher who must give continuity to the child's art experiences from year to year. That teacher can introduce modeling clay, paints, and colors in the kindergarten and first grade, and then build on and refine skills in the second and third grades, and relate them to subject matter in grades four through six.

A full-time art teacher can establish a sequence of art learning better than a classroom teacher. A good teacher is aware of what boys and girls know about drawing human figures, showing distance and spatial relations and other concepts, how they use their imaginations, and when they need help. Individual growth can be observed from year to year by knowing what Johnny did the previous year, or remembering problems he may have had with certain manipulations in kindergarten. An art teacher will know if primary and secondary colors were taught at an earlier level, and when students are ready for more advanced color relationships. A teacher knows which art reproductions were used in the previous grades, when it is time to repeat them, and how to help children talk about art.

That is, art teachers can do this if they are in the same school long enough to give yearly continuity to the art program.

When Johnny has the same art teacher from kindergarten through grade six, that teacher will be the only one in the building who has really seen him grow, learn, and confront mental, emotional and aesthetic problems for seven consecutive school years. The classroom teacher knows Johnny well only for the year he is in that class and, as a rule, only at one grade level.

If Johnny is fortunate enough to live in a school district that provides an art teacher for each elementary school, with a sequentially planned and coordinated art program and art class at least once a week, then he can follow an individual pace and his special needs will be met. In a single school year he may have as many as 36 to 38 art classes with some coordination with other subjects. But if his art teacher goes to two or more schools, he may have art only every second, third, or fourth week. This will give him only 19, 12 or 9 art lessons a year—not enough for the continuous aesthetic and creative growth we are talking about. Art activities without a planned learning sequence are not an art program—they are merely a series of activities.

In some school districts, an art specialist is assigned to the upper elementary grades (four through six) of two schools, while regular classroom teachers cope with art in kindergarten and grades one through three. In my opinion the procedure should be reversed. Trained art teachers should teach basic art skills at the same time children are learning their other basic skills. Art teachers are usually better prepared to do this than classroom teachers; they know the scope and sequence of the basic art skills. Besides learning to draw and exploring their visual vocabulary, children from kindergarten to grade three are mastering their control over materials. These years, called the "latency period" by psychologist Erik Erikson, are all-important. If children do not master their motor skills (writing, drawing, painting, building, cutting, and pasting), they will develop feelings of inferiority that will undermine all future growth in these skills.

Besides giving scope and sequence to basic skills and concepts, the trained art teacher can recognize the needs of children by looking at their work. Teachers not trained in art

may think only in terms of talent or lack of talent, rather than in terms of particular strengths and weaknesses. Unless they are especially interested and study beyond certification requirements, regular classroom teachers are likely to be poorly trained to teach art. State certification guidelines generally list art as optional or recommend three credits in art or music. Three credits in studio art, crafts, art history, aesthetics, or "arts and crafts in the classroom" hardly suffice to prepare teachers to plan a child's growth in art or recognize his needs. Sometimes future teachers are led to believe that all art teaching in schools is done by specialists, and they dismiss even that modest recommendation of three credits—only to find that the specialists aren't there when they come to their first jobs.

When children develop secure feelings about their art skills at the primary level, they are better able to use and build on them in the upper elementary and junior high schools, whether the skills and knowledge gained are applied to other subjects, or form the basis for further study in art. Junior high is a time when students want to work more independently in art but still wish to test themselves against adult standards. Not to have the knowledge or skill to do so is self-defeating.

In recent years, as a result of funding by the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Office of Education, and others, "Artists-in-the-Schools" activities have been used to enrich art programs (occasionally to fill the want of an art teacher). Valuable as these activities are for adding a professional dimension, they should not be considered sufficient in themselves. An artist in a school for a few days or weeks cannot give children the range of art knowledge and skill which they should have from kindergarten to grade twelve. The role of the artist in the schools cannot substitute for the role of the trained art teacher. The artists in the schools should enrich the art program—not replace it; and their roles should be planned in cooperation with the regular art staff, not divorced from it.

A final comment about art teachers. Most of them are, themselves, artists and craftspeople. Although they have traditionally refrained from exhibiting their own work in school for fear that it would unduly influence their students, I encourage them to do so—with pride.

### **A word about art in the secondary schools.**

Art programs in the secondary schools should not be only for students who are talented in art. Essentially, art is for everybody: the average student, the handicapped student, and the college-bound student. All should continue to master new skills and refine old ones. They should learn the kinds of things suggested by the NAEP, such as styles and periods of art and their relationship to each other and to other disciplines.

For those students who are talented in art, evidence of professionalism in their teachers is important. They want to know that their teachers can do what they teach. In secondary school adolescents may be looking for roles in society. Those who want to find roles in art need the assistance of art teachers and guidance counselors to identify the variety of jobs artists may have. These range from the top-paying positions of art directors and free-lance industrial and textile designers and illustrators, to graphic artists, copyists, layout artists, cartoonists and colorists, photographers, film-animators, and many others. The career world of the arts in the late twentieth century is much more extensive and technological than that of the fine artist, illustrator, engraver, or copyist of the nineteenth century when the familiar stereotypes of artists-in-garrets were formed.

Unfortunately, the college-bound student is sometimes dissuaded from taking art in order to take courses that weigh more heavily in college admissions scales. A 1963 report found that high school graduates entering college were "illiterate in the fine arts."

In 1968, I surveyed fifty-three colleges, universities, and proprietary art schools in New York, New Jersey, and New England, to determine their admissions criteria for students entering their freshman art program. Frequent among their responses was the criticism that high school art teachers did not teach students to draw and paint. What these criticisms overlooked was that incoming college freshmen usually could not take art in high school, and probably had not taken art since the seventh or eighth grade. Paradoxically, some liberal arts colleges require art or art history and appreciation as a requirement for graduation, often in the freshman year.

Changes have been taking place, however. Following the 1957 launching of Sputnik, when public schools pushed for more science and math, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology made high school art an entrance requirement. In 1968 a survey report on college acceptance of art credits published by the National Art Education Association indicated that of the 1337 colleges and universities surveyed, 677 responded and of these 539 accepted art credits; 91 did not.<sup>6</sup> The state of Washington Basic Education Act of 1977 included the abilities "to distinguish, interpret, and make use of symbols including sound, colors, shapes, and textures" and "to organize . . . symbols into acceptable verbal and non-verbal forms of expression" among those skills considered essential for learning.<sup>7</sup> In 1978, Fred Hargadon, Stanford University Dean of Admissions, recommended that students seeking to enroll at Stanford should include "some study of music or art or both" in their secondary school preparation.<sup>8</sup>

People who have not had a school art program like the one I have suggested often say, "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like." Such an attitude is both unnecessary and unacceptable. As I have plainly tried to show, an elementary art curriculum can be designed to teach basic skills and concepts and to develop creative mental processes—processes which, as I have suggested, are not peculiar to the field of art. The secondary school can build on these skills and add new dimensions (interdisciplinary studies, art as a profession, art history). Such programs are not, in my opinion, based on inflated notions about art; rather, they treat art as a basic learning process requiring hard work, discipline, and demonstrated achievement. In today's society, we can ask for nothing less. No person is truly educated unless he is also educated in art.

## NOTES

1. This panel, composed of persons concerned about the arts, education, and the American way of life, published its findings in *Coming to Our Senses: The Significance of the Arts for American Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977).
2. The following material (pages 19-23) is drawn from *Relating Art to the Humanities* by Robert J. Saunders (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1977, pp. 110-113) with the permission of the publisher. This book identifies the goals and purposes of art education and describes ways to correlate and integrate the arts, humanities, and aesthetic education.
3. See *A Source Book for Creative Thinking* edited by Sidney J. Parnes and Harold F. Harding, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962). Contains chapters by Viktor Lowenfeld, "Creativity: Education's Step Child," and J. P. Guilford, "Introductory Portion of Creativity, Presidential Address in 1950" and "Creativity: Its Measurement and Development."
4. Lowenfeld, Viktor and William L. Brittain, *Creative and Mental Growth* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1975). A classic; when first published in 1947 it changed the course of art education. Gives suggestions on motivations and methods.
5. "High School Grads 'Illiterate' in Art, Music." *Phi Delta Kappan*, January 1963, p. 188.
6. "College and University Acceptance of High School Art Credits for Admission." *Art Education*, October 1968, unnumbered pp. 28-35.
7. "Your Public Schools", a publication of the Washington State Department of Public Instruction, Sept. 12, 1977, p. 4.
8. Press release, *Stanford University News Service*, October 1978.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

(See also preceding Notes section)

Benson, Ann. "Artists in the Schools." *Council for Basic Education Bulletin*, May 1977, pp. 6-8. A report on this federally funded program.

———. "Coming to Our Senses: A Review." *CBE Bulletin*, September 1977, pp. 7-9. A review of the Arts, Education and Americans report.

———. "NAEP Art Assessment." *CBE Bulletin*, October 1978, pp. 5-6. A commentary on the art assessment.

Broudy, Harry S. "How Basic is Aesthetic Education? Or Is 'Rt the Fourth R?" *Educational Leadership*, November 1977, pp. 134-141. A sensible analysis of current thinking on the arts.

Chapman, Laura. *Approaches to Art Education*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1978. Diversified approaches for teaching art in the elementary schools according to purposes, situations, and children's development.

Churchill, Angiola, R. *Art for Preadolescents*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1970-71. Suggestions for teaching art in the junior high school based on the author's experience at the School for Physical Culture in New York City.

Eisner, Elliot W. *Educating Artistic Vision*. New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1972. One of the most prominent of today's art educators discusses his views on art as a basis for learning and growing.

Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1963. A description of the eight stages of growth and the effect of different cultures on the growth and development of children.

Feldman, Edmund B. *Becoming Human Through Art*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970. A discussion of numerous approaches to art with suggestions for curriculum development.

Hurwitz, Albert and Stanley S. Madeja. *A Joyous Vision: A Source Book for Elementary Art Appreciation*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978. A foundation for teaching art criticism and appreciation in schools and museums.

Kellogg, Rhoda. *Analyzing Children's Art*. Palo Alto, California: National Press Books, Inc., 1969. A classification and interpretation of children's scribbles and drawings gathered from thousands of examples by children aged two and one half to seven years.

Linderman, Marlene M. *Art in the Elementary School*. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1971. Answers to questions teachers ask about art and suggestions for art activities.

Lindsay, Zaidee. *Art and the Handicapped Child*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1972. An examination of handicaps and learning problems and suggestions for suitable art activities.

Lowenfeld, Viktor, *Your Child and His Art: A Guide for Parents*. New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1960. An explanation of the stages of growth in art especially written for parents and laypersons.

McFee, June K. and Rogena M. Degge. *Art, Culture and Environment: A Catalyst for Teaching*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1970. How children are influenced by their culture and how they see and use drawing as a basis for learning.

Plummer, Gordon S. *Children's Art Judgment: A Curriculum for Elementary Art Appreciation*. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1974. Lessons and activities arranged by grade level for teaching art history and appreciation in elementary classrooms.

Saunders, Robert J. *Teaching Through Art, A Multi-Purpose Art Print Program*. New York: American Book Company, 1972. Teachers' manuals and art reproductions (Series A, K-6; B, K-3; C, grades 4-6) to use in teaching aesthetic analysis, art history, visual perception, and other skills.

Striker, Susan and Ed Kimmel. *Anti-Coloring Book*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978. Partial drawings, symbols, and other motivations to encourage children to use their imaginations and to do their own drawings instead of using coloring books.

Venturi, Lionello. *A History of Art Criticism*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1965. A discussion of the changing philosophies of art criticism, aesthetic analysis, and appreciation from the ancient Greeks to modern art.

. . . . .

Readers should also know that the National Gallery of Art has a free loan service which will send slides, films, tapes and manuals about art history, crafts, fine and folk arts, and other aspects of art to interested persons. For a free catalog, write National Gallery of Art, Extension Program Free Loan Service, Washington, DC 20565.

This Occasional Paper is one of a series published by the Council for Basic Education, 725 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. The Occasional Papers are distributed without charge to all members of the Council at the time of publication. Previous issues and additional copies may be purchased at the prices shown below. Orders for 20 or more copies of one title receive a 20 percent discount. Titles still in stock:

*Phonics in Beginning Reading: A Guide for Teachers and Parents.* \$1.00.

*Inner-City Children Can Be Taught to Read: Four Successful Schools* by George Weber. \$1.00.

*Uses and Abuses of Standardized Testing in the Schools* by George Weber. \$1.00.

*A Sound Curriculum in English Grammar. Guidelines for Teachers and Parents* by Kenneth Oliver. \$1.00.

*Choosing a Science Program for the Elementary School* by Howard J. Hausman. \$1.00.

*Art in Basic Education* by Jacques Barzun and Robert J. Saunders. \$2.00.

*What Are You Doing Here? or Schooldays for the Teacher* by Ellen Glanz. \$2.00.

*The Education of Gifted and Talented Students: A History and Prospectus* by James J. Gallagher and Patricia Weiss. \$2.00.

*Education's Stepchild, Inservice Training* by Peter Greer. \$2.00.

*Minimum Competency Testing: Guidelines for Policymakers and Citizens* by Dennis Gray. \$2.00.

*Improving Curriculum Management in the Schools* by Fenwick English. \$2.00.

\*Non-members enjoy a 20% discount on orders of 20 or more copies of a single publication.

\*Members enjoy a 20% discount on all publications when they indicate their membership identification number on their order.

\*Please add 20% when paying in foreign currency.